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## BOOK REVIEWS.

*La navigation commerciale au xixe siècle.* By AMBROSE COLIN.  
Paris : Rousseau, 1901. 8vo, pp. viii + 459.

ON April 23, 1838, two vessels, the "Sirius" and the "Great Western," entered the harbor of New York. The arrival of these, the first Atlantic liners, created great excitement in that city. In the less than seventy years since that date the great merchant marines and armored fleets of nations have been built. The early steamers were of wood, the latter ones of steel. This transition did not take place until 1877, when the first vessel built of steel was launched. In 1860 the first triple-expansion engine was created, twenty-five years later the English government adopted it for the propelling of British war vessels. In the seventies marine architecture faced the despairing problem of excessively heavy marine engines with low horse power. The contrast between the engine of that day and the present is vividly set forth in the statement that a 4,000 horse power marine engine of the seventies weighed as much as the present monster engine of 38,000 horse power. Within a period of thirty years these difficulties have been surmounted by the new steel construction, the compound engine, and the screw and the great vessels of today made possible.

In a recital of these facts and many others in the history of shipping M. Ambrose Colin opens his book *La navigation commerciale au xixe siècle*. The book beginning with the introduction already aluded to is divided into three parts. The first deals with the "tools" of navigation; the second with the revolution in the shipping industry; and the third with the officers and men in the marine service. In opening part one of the book the author says:

Toute industrie a son outillage propre. Celui de l'industrie des transports maritimes se compose de trois instruments: le navire, le port, la voie, c'est-à-dire, la mer. Le premier est créé par l'homme; le second est un produit de la collaboration de l'homme et de la nature; le troisième apparaît comme un pur don de la nature; et cependant, par son ingéniosité, l'homme a trouvé moyen de la modifier sensiblement à son avantage.

The ship, the port and the sea furnish the text for the chapters of part one.

In part two a somewhat similar analysis gives the commercial, political and legal aspects of the revolution in the building and operation of ships. These phases are dealt with in three chapters by the names just given. Part three is devoted to a short chapter on "Le Personnel," with which the book closes.

The most interesting part of the book is the portion devoted to the relation of ports and ships. In it are shown the vital influences of capital, hungry for interest without ceasing, upon the future of towns and cities. The evolution is found in the change from river to sea-ports. Many of the great cities are now located on rivers such as Hamburg, Antwerp, London and Liverpool; but in each case vast sums of money have been spent, and are annually being spent, to render such ports usable by the ships of great draught and length. Already the steamship companies are seeking ocean ports for the more rapid discharge of freight and passengers. The justification for this change is the loss of time now undergone in entering and clearing from river ports. In the ocean ports the vessels are not required to wait for tides and steam distances varying from fifty to two hundred miles under half speed. In fact the vast sums now invested in vessels require ports on the sea with docks and wharves for rapid unloading.

France has materially suffered by her neglect of this simple point. The government of that state has spent a great deal of revenue upon her seventy ports. The result of this wholesale method of distribution has been to give France a large number of small and poorly equipped ports. Today France has but one modern port equipped for the accommodation of the great modern steamship. In this respect the United States is better provided by nature than many of her European competitors. The ports of New York, Boston, Baltimore, Savannah, San Francisco and Portland furnish the evidence for this statement. The serious phase of the question is found in the probable decline of the older river ports and the appearance of unheard of places as the ocean termini of the steamship companies.

M. Colin has pointed out the prevalence of the protectionist idea and the notion that trade follows the flag. The situation in France presents the paradox of a protectionist nation subsidizing vessels whose cargoes are limited by legislation of that type. Upon this point M. Colin says in forcible language:

Nulle tâche ne semble, des l'abord, plus délicate. Concilier intérêts divergents, au moins en apparence, de la construction et de l'armement, ce

problème devant lequel nous avons échoué jusqu'à présent, n'est, en somme, que la moindre des difficultés à surmonter. Comment, par exemple, faire prospérer une industrie que ne vit que de l'intensité régulière et croissante des échanges, dans une communauté qui a élevé à la hauteur d'un dogme l'idée de la protection douanière, et qui travaille, ainsi, à restaurer les distances que la science avait supprimées ? Et, d'autre part, n'y a-t-il pas des antinomies, douloureuses entre les aspirations du prolétariat de la mer, luttant, avec les armes du syndicat et de la grève pour conquérir un sort meilleur, et le régime de l'Inscription maritime, cette institution d'un autre âge maintenue à cause des nécessités de la Défense nationale — entre les revendications de notre Commerce qui étouffe sous l'armature pesante des réglementations administratives, qui réclame plus d'air et plus d'espace, et la tendance actuelle, commune à tous les États, consistant à faire de la navigation commerciale, dûment subventionnée et primée, une affaire d'intérêt public et comme le prolongement des grands services nationaux ? Encore supposons que l'on parvienne à dénouer tant d'irréductibles conflits. A peine l'œuvre est-elle finie qu'elle se trouve surannée, car les faits se précipitent et la physionome des choses se transforme incessamment ! Puisse donc notre législateur ne pas s'attarder outre mesure à chercher le parfait équilibre entre les tendances opposées. Qu'il s'applique surtout à faire vite et à parer au plus pressé. On ne lui demande point et il ne saurait avoir la prétention de travailler pour l'éternité.

The French legislation on shipping matters is divided by the year 1860. The period before that date was filled with regulations for the taxation of foreign shipping. Since 1860 the state has entered upon the encouragement of the merchant marine by adding the financial burden to the budget of the state. The subsidy system has rendered construction slow and expensive and seemingly ineffective in producing results. Under these circumstances the author is hardly justified in referring to the United States as showing even still greater decay than France in the creation of a merchant marine. The marvelous revival in shipbuilding since 1890 in the United States is evidently overlooked.

The book, admirable as it is as a discussion of certain phases of the merchant marine, is not equal to the title *La navigation commerciale au xixe siècle*. Lindsay devoted four volumes to the history of English shipping, but here in one volume the results, policies and legislation of the nineteenth century in reference to the world's merchant marine are set forth. The first chapter (the introduction) instead of occupying but twenty-seven pages of the text ought, in order to balance the book, be materially enlarged and extended.

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